

Islamophobia Op-ed

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Since the recent presidential elections in the States, many political tensions have risen to surface, and has resulted in increased hate and intolerance. One of these tensions include the issue of Islamophobia, or the hatred towards Islam. Post 9/11, Islamophobia truly came into effect in America, and post Trump running for election, many have felt free to express this hatred. However, the hate crimes and protests against Islam and Muslims that ensued, while first limited to the States, are believed to have spread North up to our homeland, Canada. While promoting ourselves as a country with significant multiculturalism, many recent cases claim otherwise. The following piece will analyze the recent hate crimes in Canada, whether these are new or an old practice, and what Canadians are doing about it.

One of Trump's primary campaign objectives was the deportation and banning of Muslims. Before Trump, many Americans were not upfront with their hatred and prejudice, but once a person with power and influence felt free to express their prejudice like did Trump, so did many people; they did so through supporting this ban and crimes against anyone Muslim. While these crimes were relevant in America, it has not been so apparent in Canada according to some until recently. One case is the murder of the six Canadians during prayer at a mosque in Quebec, or the burning of a mosque in Peterborough which was deemed as a hate crime. Both these crimes have occurred since Trump has come into political spotlight, and have resulted as per the increased feeling of freedom for people to express their hate.

However, Islamophobia is not a newly introduced issue in Canada as many Canadians now believe. Speaking as a Canadian-Muslim growing up under the conservative government of Stephen Harper, the issue of Muslim immigration, what a refugee's moral values may be, and whether they are bringing the "Sharia Law" with them have been variously put up for question and debate. Despite Canada being the home to over one million Muslims, a study in 2013, long before

Trump in power, showed that over half of Canadians do not view Islam favourably. However, hate crimes against Muslim have doubled over the past three years and much of this is unfortunately credited to him.

The response of Canadians has been mixed; Justin Trudeau showed immense sympathy for the Canadians shot at the Quebec mosque, calling all Canadians for peace. However recently, a group of protestors stood outside a mosque in Toronto, claiming Islam is a religion promoting terrorism.

While Trump has spewed a tremendous increase in the number of hate crimes against Muslims in Canada, giving him full credit for introducing the practice of Islamophobia is not legitimate. However, while hate crimes have been relevant before that, it has become more apparent now and Canadians have chosen to respond differently. But through these rising political tensions of Islamophobia, Canadians must remember that regardless of religion, we are all protected and safe, and not to allow hate to divide us.

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